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## USACE Casualty Reporting, Notification, and Assistance Policy

1. **POLICY:** It is the policy of USACE to promptly report casualties, notify next of kin, and provide compassionate, caring assistance to the casualty and their family.

2. **REFERENCES:**

DOD Instruction 1300.18, Personnel Casualty Matters, Policies, and Procedures, 8 Jan 08.

AR 600-8-1, Army Casualty Assistance Program, 30 Apr 07.

3. **PURPOSE:** This Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) prescribes policies, procedures, and responsibilities for reporting of casualties throughout the Chain of Command, Notifying the primary next of kin (PNOK), and providing casualty assistance to the casualty and their family. It is applicable to all USACE casualties as defined below whether in peacetime or military operations.
4. **DEFINITIONS:** (see Glossary for additional definitions)
  - a. **Casualty.** Any person (within one of the reportable categories listed in the Glossary) who is lost to the organization by reason of having been declared beleaguered, besieged, captured, dead, diseased, detained, DUSTWUN, EAWUN, injured, ill, interned, missing, missing in action or wounded.
  - b. **Casualty Assistance Center (CAC).** The CAC assigned responsibility for the area in which the casualty occurs or the area in which the NOK resides, and who has casualty reporting responsibilities to AHRC. This term applies to both CONUS and OCONUS CACs.
  - c. **Casualty Program functions:**
    - i. **Casualty reporting.** Casualty reporting is the source of information provided to the next of kin (NOK) concerning a casualty incident. It is of the utmost importance to provide that information accurately, promptly, and in as much detail as possible so that the NOK receive as full an accounting as possible of the casualty incident. Dispatch the initial report within 12 hours from the time of the incident to CMAOC.
    - ii. **Casualty notification.** The casualty notification officer (CNO) notifies the NOK of an individual who has been reported as a casualty in a timely, professional, and dignified manner. The CNO will notify NOK within 4 hours of his/her assignment as CNO. The method of notification varies, depending upon the type of casualty and circumstances surrounding the incident. AR 600-8-1 specifies duties of a person designated as a CNO for deceased, missing, or duty status-whereabouts unknown (DUSTWUN) Soldiers in chapter 5, section I, and for injured or ill Soldiers at chapter 5, section II.

Notification is made in person by a uniformed Soldier for deceased, missing, or DUSTWUN Soldiers and telephonically for injured or ill Soldiers (chap 5). If there is a chance that the NOK may learn of the casualty by other than official sources, the chief, CMAOC (AHRC-PEZ) may approve notification by the quickest means, normally the telephone. In such an event, a Uniformed Services representative will render official condolences (for death cases) or official expressions of concern (for missing or DUSTWUN cases) in person. The CAC should make every effort to provide a chaplain to accompany the CNO. When a chaplain is not available, a second Soldier will accompany the CNO on the notification mission.

- iii. Casualty assistance. Casualty assistance is always provided to those receiving benefits and/or entitlements in death, missing, or DUSTWUN cases and to those NOK who have need for ongoing exchanges of information with the Department of the Army (DA), such as parents who are secondary next of kin (SNOK). The casualty assistance officer (CAO) provides these services. The main objectives of casualty assistance are:
  - 1. Assist the NOK during the period immediately following a casualty.
  - 2. Assist in settling claims and applying for and receipt of survivor benefits.
  - 3. Assist in other personnel-related affairs.
  - 4. Serve as the Army's liaison to pass information relating to the Soldier or the incident between the Army and the family.
- d. Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Center (CMAOC). The Human Resources Command operations center responsible for all casualty and mortuary affairs worldwide including development for all policies, regulations, pamphlets, and procedures related to this subject.
- e. Primary Next of Kin (PNOK). The person most closely related to the casualty is considered primary NOK for casualty notification and assistance purposes. This is normally the spouse of married persons and the parents of single persons who have no children. See Glossary for NOK precedence.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- a. USACE HQ Human Resources.
  - i. Establish administrative policy and procedure for casualty reporting, notification, and assistance.
  - ii. Coordinate benefits and entitlements to USACE Casualties and PNOK.
- b. USACE Operations Centers.
  - i. Manage ENGLink system to include casualty reporting, SIR, CCIR tracking.
  - ii. Provide Casualty notification and assistance coordination support between CMAOC/CAC and USACE Districts.

- c. Casualty Assistance Center.
  - i. Assign CNO and CAO for all deceased, VSI, DUSTWUN casualties.
  - ii. Make PNOK notifications for all, VSI, DUSTWUN casualties.
  - iii. Validate that reporting has been made for all other categories by the casualty or District or make notification if not completed, then assign CAO if authorized.
- d. USACE District where casualty incident occurred.
  - i. Get appropriate emergency medical care for casualty.
  - ii. Determine if casualty can / desires to self-notify PNOK. If so, facilitate.
  - iii. Report casualty to Chain of Command via ENGLink.
  - iv. Report casualty to servicing Casualty Assistance Center, including self-notification of PNOK by casualty.
  - v. Notify Division Commander directly via phone / email.
  - vi. Notify casualty's home District Commander via email.
  - vii. Prepare and submit FECA claim forms.
- e. USACE Home District (where Casualty / PNOK resides permanently).
  - i. Identify a family support representative (FSR) to all USACE deployed DA civilians whose permanent residence or PNOK is within your military district. The FSR should make routine contact with the PNOK to provide deployment support.
  - ii. Contact servicing CAC to determine if casualty PNOK notification has been made and appointed CAO contact information.
  - iii. Provide casualty support to casualty and PNOK through coordination with CAC appointed CAO. Consider assigning the District FSR assigned to that family to support the CAO.

## 6. REPORTING AND PNOK NOTIFICATION PROCESS:

- a. Peacetime. Peacetime operations may include OCONUS duty or TDY that creates a reportable casualty. They may also include CONUS duty when in a TDY status. Peacetime operations are typically civil emergency support operations (e.g. Katrina). Figure 1 shows the required process for both Command reporting and PNOK notification.
- b. Military Operations. USACE support to military operations requires that the peacetime casualty reporting and PNOK process be integrated into the theater casualty operations process. As such it is likely to be theater specific. Figures 2 and 3 show the Gulf Region Division and Afghanistan Engineer District respectively. Future operations will require that that USACE Division or District obtain the Theater Command procedure and integrate USACE operations into that procedure.

## **Glossary of Terms**

**Casualty.** Any person (within one of the reportable categories) who is lost to the organization by reason of having been declared beleaguered, besieged, captured, dead, diseased, detained, DUSTWUN, EAWUN, injured, ill, interned, missing, missing in action or wounded.

Lost to the organization reasons.

**Beleaguered.** The casualty is a member of an organized element which has been surrounded by a hostile force to preclude escape of its members.

**Besieged.** The casualty is a member of an organized element that has been surrounded by a hostile force for compelling it to surrender.

**Captured.** The casualty has been seized as the result of action of an unfriendly military or paramilitary force in a foreign country.

**Deceased.** A casualty status applicable to a person who is either known to have died, determined to have died based upon receipt of conclusive evidence, or declared dead based upon a presumptive finding of death. The recovery of the person's remains is not a prerequisite to determining or declaring a person deceased.

**Detained.** A casualty status applicable to a person who is prevented from proceeding or is restrained in custody for alleged violation of international law or other reasons claimed by the government or group under which the person is being held.

**Duty Status – Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN).** A transitory/temporary casualty status, used when the reason for a member's absence is uncertain and it is possible that the member may be a casualty whose absence is involuntary, but there is not sufficient evidence to make a determination that the member's actual status is missing or deceased.

**EAWUN.** Excused Absence Whereabouts Unknown.

**Interned.** Any person definitely known to have been taken into custody of a non-belligerent foreign power as the result of and for reasons arising out of any armed conflict in which the Armed Forces of the United States are engaged.

**Killed in action (KIA).** A casualty category applicable to a hostile casualty, other than the victim of a terrorist activity, who is killed outright or who dies as a result of wounds or other injuries before reaching a medical treatment facility.

**Missing.** A casualty status applicable to a person who is not at his or her duty location due to apparent involuntary reasons and whose location may or may not be known.

Missing in Action (MIA). The casualty is a hostile casualty, other than the victim of a terrorist activity, who is not present at his or her duty location due to apparent involuntary reasons and whose location is unknown.

Not Seriously Wounded, Injured, or Ill (NSI). The casualty status of a person whose injury or illness may or may not require hospitalization, medical authority does not classify as VSI, SI or III, and the person can communicate with the NOK.

Seriously Wounded, Injured, or Ill (SI). Casualty status of a person whose illness or injury is classified by medical authorities to be of such severity that there is cause for immediate concern, but there is no imminent danger to life.

Very Seriously Wounded, Injured, or Ill (VSI). The casualty status of a person whose illness or injury is classified by medical authorities to be of such severity that life is imminently endangered.

Casualty Area Center (CAC). The CAC assigned responsibility for the area in which the casualty occurs or the area in which the PNOK resides, and who has casualty reporting responsibilities delegated from HRC. This term applies to both CONUS and OCONUS CACs.

Casualty and Mortuary Assistance Operations Center (CMAOC). The Human Resources Command operations center responsible for all casualty and mortuary affairs worldwide including development for all policies, regulations, pamphlets, and procedures related to this subject.

Human Resources Command (HRC). Command responsible for all casualty operations within the Army.

Primary Next of Kin (PNOK) precedence. The person most closely related to the casualty is considered primary NOK for casualty notification and assistance purposes. This is normally the spouse of married persons and the parents of single persons who have no children. The precedence of NOK with equal relationships to the member is governed by seniority (age). The rights of minor children shall be exercised by their parents or legal guardian. The below order of precedence is used to identify the primary NOK. All other persons are considered secondary NOK. For the order of precedence used concerning the disposition of remains and personal effects, consult appropriate statutes and Service regulations.

- a. Spouse.
- b. Natural, adopted, step, and illegitimate children (if acknowledge by the member or paternity/maternity has been judicially decreed.)
- c. Parents, unless legal exclusive (sole) custody was granted to a person by reason of a court decree or statutory provision.
- d. Persons standing in loco parentis.
- e. Persons granted legal custody of the member by a court decree or statutory provision.
- f. Brothers or sisters, to include half-blood and those acquired through adoption.
- g. Grandparents.

- h. Other relatives in order of relationship to the member according to civil laws.
- i. If no other persons are available, the Secretary of the Military Department may be deemed to act on behalf of the member. In those cases involving missing service members found dead pursuant to 37 USC, the remarried surviving spouse should be notified when remains are recovered. Although the remarried surviving spouse has no blood relationship to the members, the prior marital relationship and the continuing interest in the members are the determining factors. The term remarried surviving spouse does not include one who obtained a divorce from the member or who remarried before a finding of death pursuant to 37 USC.

**Reportable Casualty Categories.** A casualty report is required when any of the personnel listed in the categories below becomes a casualty.

- 1) All Army members on active duty. The term “active duty” includes RC members in an Active Guard/Reserve (AGR) status, Reserve and National Guard members mobilized under 10 USC, and RC Soldiers serving in a “sanctuary” status or recalled retired Soldiers.
- 2) U.S. Army Reserve and ARNG Soldiers who die while en route to or from, or while participating in, any of the following authorized training activities—
  - a) Annual training (AT).
  - b) Active duty for training (ADT).
  - c) Full-time National Guard duty (FTNGD).
  - d) Temporary tour of active duty (TTAD).
  - e) Initial active duty training (IADT).
  - f) Scheduled inactive duty training (IDT).
  - g) Active duty for special work (ADSW).
  - h) Special active duty for training (SADT).
- 3) Soldiers who die while en route to or from or at a place for final acceptance for entry on active duty (AD) with the Army. This includes personnel in the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) en route to or from Recruiting Command approved activities.
- 4) Cadets and students enrolled in Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) performing authorized training or travel (5 USC 8140 or 36 USC 2110).
- 5) United States Military Academy (USMA) cadets.
- 6) Soldiers in an absent without leave (AWOL) status.
- 7) Soldiers in a deserter status.
- 8) Members of other Services (see AR 600-8-1 para 3--6).
- 9) Retired general officers of the Army.
- 10) Retired Soldiers who held the office of Sergeant Major of the Army.

- 11) Medal of Honor recipients.
- 12) Retired Soldiers with 100 percent disability who die within 1 year of separation from the Army (RETIRED, Temporary Disability Retired List/Permanent Disability Retired List (TDRL/PDRL) 100 percent).
- 13) Retired, separated, or discharged Soldiers who die within 120 days of separation from the Army. This Includes
  - a) Soldiers with disability of less than 100 percent (released from active duty (REFRAD 120).
  - b) All other retirees, including those covered in accordance with 10 USC 1331 (grey area retirees—retired but not yet receiving retirement pay).
  - c) Retirees who die after being continuously hospitalized, including hospice care facilities and veterans' treatment facilities, since the date of retirement or separation from service. Department of the Army employees paid from appropriated funds who die during travel status or temporary duty (TDY) within the 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- 14) Department of the Army employees paid from appropriated funds while assigned, deployed, or TDY outside the continental United States (OCONUS).
- 15) Family members of DA employees paid from appropriated funds residing with the employee stationed outside of the 50 states and the District of Columbia or while in transit to or from the 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- 16) Other U.S. civilians who become a casualty OCONUS and are:
  - a) Non-appropriated fund employees of the DA.
  - b) Contract field technicians or other contract employees working in support of the Armed Forces of the United States or other U.S. Government agencies in a deployed theater of operations.
  - c) Visiting dignitaries.
  - d) Representatives of DA-sponsored organizations (such as the American Red Cross, the United Services Organization (USO), and banking facilities).
  - e) U.S. citizens for whom local State Department officials have requested the overseas CMD assume casualty reporting responsibilities.
  - f) Contract representatives of the DVA and the Department of Labor.
  - g) Reporters who are embedded with deployed U.S. armed forces.
  - h) Any other category of interest so designated by the SA or CSA as reportable.
- 17) All family members of active duty personnel. Family members are those who are entitled to military identification (ID) cards or are claimed as dependents on the Soldier's tax returns.
- 18) Allied government personnel who die in continental United States (CONUS).
- 19) Foreign military trainees who die in CONUS.

- 20) Family members of retired personnel who die in a medical treatment facility (MTF) within the United States (does not include Alaska or Hawaii).